तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Time, Place, and Circumstance

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The method of worship — chanting the mantra and preparing the forms of the Lord — is not stereotyped, nor is it exactly the same everywhere. It is specifically mentioned in this verse that one should take consideration of the time, place and available conveniences. Our Krishna consciousness movement is going on throughout the entire world, and we also install deities in different centers. Sometimes our Indian friends, puffed up with concocted notions, criticize, "This has not been done. That has not been done." But they forget this instruction of Narada Muni to one of the greatest *vaiṣṇavas*, Dhruva Maharaja. One has to consider the particular time, country and conveniences. What is convenient in India may not be convenient in the Western countries. Those who are not actually in the line of *ācāryas*, or who personally have no knowledge of how to act in the role of *ācārya*, unnecessarily criticize the activities of the ISKCON movement in countries outside of India. The fact is that such critics cannot do anything personally to spread Krishna consciousness. If someone does go and preach, taking all risks and allowing all considerations for time and place, it might be that there are changes in the manner of worship, but that is not at all faulty according to *śāstra*. Srimad Viraraghava Acharya, an *ācārya* in the disciplic succession of the *Rāmānuja-sampradāya*, has remarked in his commentary that *caṇḍālas*, or conditioned souls who are born in lower than *śūdra* families, can also be initiated according to circumstances. The formalities may be slightly changed here and there to make them *vaiṣṇavas*. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.8.54)

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wanted to invent a way to capture the *Māyāvādīs* and others who did not take interest in the Krishna consciousness movement. This is the symptom of an *ācārya*. An *ācārya* who comes for the service of the Lord cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Krishna consciousness may be spread. (Purport to *Cc. ādi.* 7.31-32)

It is the concern of the *ācārya* to show mercy to the fallen souls. In this connection, *deśa-kāla-pātra* (the place, the time and the object) should be taken into consideration. (Purport to *Cc. ādi* 7.38)

The teacher (*ācārya*) has to consider time, candidate and country. He must avoid the principle of *niyamāgraha* — that is, he should not try to perform the impossible. What is possible in one country may not be possible

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in another. The *ācārya's* duty is to accept the essence of devotional service. There may be a little change here and there as far as *yukta-vairāgya*, proper renunciation, is concerned.... The essence of devotional service must be taken into consideration, and not the outward paraphernalia. (Purport to *Cc. madhya* 23.105)

These are the secrets of the *ācāryas*. Sometimes they conceal the real purpose of the Vedas and explain the Vedas in a different way. Sometimes they enunciate a different theory just to bring the atheists under their control. (*Cc. madhya* 25.42)

Buddhist philosophy is incomplete, but that does not mean Lord Buddha did not know the complete truth. A teacher may have received his Master's degree, yet he still teaches the ABC's to his students. It is not that his knowledge is limited to the ABC's. Similarly, any especially empowered incarnation (*śaktyāveśa avatāra*) will preach God consciousness according to time, place, and circumstances. The teacher holds his Master's degree, but the students may not be qualified to receive the high instructions that the teacher is competent to teach. *(A Second Chance,* chapter 11)

God, or a particular representative of God, comes to teach people in different circumstances. According to the circumstances there may be some difference in explanation, but the primary factor remains the same. (Lecture in Seattle, 2 October 1968)

The Vedas instruct us that knowledge must always be considered in terms of *deśa-kāla-pātra. Deśa* means "circumstances," *kāla* means "time," and *pātra* means "the object". We must understand everything by taking these three elements into consideration. (*Life Comes from Life*: The First Morning Walk, April 18, 1973)

A *vaiṣṇava* who is preaching may do it in a different way. According to time, place and the party, some change is required. But we have to see the essence. ... Just like we sometimes consult a dictionary, a small pocket dictionary, and a big international dictionary. Both are dictionaries. But, *deśa-kāla-pātra*, for a small child that small dictionary is sufficient. (Lecture in Mayapur, 8 October 1974)

An *ācārya* gives some way for simple understanding. They give the same conclusion, but, according to the time and circumstances, they give a very easy method to understand. That is *ācārya. Ācārya* is one who strictly follows the previous *ācārya*, but according to the circumstances he may make little changes. However, they do not change the original idea. (Lecture in Mayapur, 19 February 1976)

It is important that we preach the message of Krishna Consciousness exactly as we have heard it from our spiritual master. The same philosophy and spirit must be there exactly. Just like we preach in this country exactly as we have heard from our spiritual master, but there are changes due to the time, circumstances, and the trainees. The spirit of the disciplic succession may not be changed, but there may be adjustments made to suit the special circumstances. (Letter to Sivananda, 23 January 1969)

Fragrance and Consciousness

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan

Govinda Bhāṣya *commentary on* Vedānta-sūtra *2.3.13.26*

vyatireko gandhavat tathā hi darśayati

Scripture explains that as a fragrance is in a different place [from the fragrant object], so [the consciousness] is also in a different place [from the soul].

PURPORT: As the fragrance of a flower or other object may travel to a place far from its source, so the consciousness that emanates from the soul may travel from the heart and enter the head, feet, or other parts of the body. The *Kauśitaki Upaniṣad* (3.6) explains:

prajñayā śarīraṁ samāruhya

By consciousness, [the soul] pervades the entire material body.

But even though a fragrance may travel very far, it is never actually separated from its

source, just as the light of a jewel is also not separated from its source. ✿

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Who is Guru?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

One who does not speak anything other than *hari-kathā*, who does not instruct others to do anything but serve Hari, and who does not himself engage even for a moment in any activity other than such service, is qualified to be a spiritual master. An insincere hypocrite cannot be guru. One who aspires for mundane activities cannot become a spiritual master. Pseudo-spiritual masters should be exposed. If a spiritual master utilizes the ingredients collected by his disciples — the wealth, alms, etc. — for his own enjoyment, or simply to accumulate gold, women, and fame, his disciples should totally reject such a spiritual master, knowing him to be a cheater. We should not hear anything from such dishonest persons. A person who usurps the ingredients meant for Krishna's service can never be called a spiritual master. The *Nāradīya Purāṇa* states:

īhā yasya harer dāsye karmaṇā manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyate

A person acting in Krishna consciousness with his body, mind, intelligence, and words, is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities.

We need not associate with the atheists who have come to engage in social service rather than Krishna's service. Such people can benefit neither themselves nor others. While performing social service, they fall into *māyā's* pit and make others fall into that pit also. We do not associate with those who make a show of chanting the holy names on beads just to cheat the Lord, or who raise a great hue and cry yet do not see Krishna in every sound vibration and Gaurasundar in every utterance. The goal of all knowledge is to develop our relationship with Krishna. If we develop a propensity to serve the Lord under the spiritual master's order, in the association of devotees, we will learn to see the entire world as made for the Lord's service. We will then utilize everything we see for that service and thus attain auspiciousness. If we associate with and serve that great personality who sees the Lord everywhere, who sees everything in relation to the Lord, who sees his spiritual master everywhere, who thinks himself humbler than a blade of grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, who does not desire respect for himself, who is always ready to respect others, and who in this way constantly chants the Lord's holy name, then the path to perfection will open. Simply out of good fortune we obtain such a bona fide spiritual master. We cannot reach Gaurasundar's shelter by accepting a servant of Maya as our spiritual master, thus maintaining our enjoying spirit.

Although Sri Gaurasundar may not currently be present in this world, if we sincerely associate with guru and the *vaiṣṇavas*, dovetailing our mentality with the mentality of such *vaiṣṇavas* — if we mix our desire with their desire — then we will, by the mercy of Sri Gaurasundar, certainly attain auspiciousness. If we can take complete shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master who is conversant with the science of Krishna, then by his proper association, service, and subordination we will attain ultimate benefit. ✿

— *Amrta Vani*. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004. Page 55.

Irresistible Death

Viṣṇu Smṛti *20.38-44*

dṛṣṭvā lokam anākrandaṁ mriyamāṇāṁś ca bāndhavān
dharmam ekaṁ sahāyārthaṁ varayadhvaṁ sadā narāḥ

Having seen that no help is to be had from this world and that your relations are dying [one after the other], one should choose virtue for ones only association.

mṛto 'pi bāndhavaḥ śakto nāṇugantuṁ naraṁ mṛtam
jāyā-varjaṁ hi sarvasya yāmyaḥ panthā virudhyate

Even if they were to die together, a kinsman is unable to follow a dying relative. Except for a wife, all others are forbidden to follow a dying person on the path of Yamaraj.

dharma eko 'nuyāty enaṁ yatra kva-cana gāminam
nanv asāre nṛ-loke 'smin dharmaṁ kuruta mā ciram

Virtue alone will follow one wherever he may go. Therefore, do your duty unflinchingly in this wretched world.

śvaḥ kāryam adya kurvīta pūrvāhṇe cāparāhṇikam
na hi pratīkṣate mṛtyuḥ kṛtaṁ vāsya na vākṛtam

Tomorrow's business should be done today, and the afternoon's business in the forenoon; for whether a person has done it or not, death will not wait.

kṣetrāpaṇa-gṛhāsaktam anyatra gata-mānasam
vṛkīvoraṇam āsādya mṛtyur ādāya gacchati

While one's mind is absorbed in one's agricultural field, the traffic on the road, ones home, or some other beloved object, death suddenly carries one away as his prey, just as a wolf catches a lamb.

na kālasya priyaḥ kaścid dveṣyaś cāsya na vidyate
āyuṣye karmaṇi kṣīṇe prasahya harate janam

Time is no ones friend and no ones enemy: when the effect of his acts in a former existence, by which his present existence is caused, has expired, he snatches a man away forcibly.

nā prāpto-kālo mriyate viddhaḥ śara-śatair api
kuśāgraṇā 'pi saṁspṛṣṭaḥ prāpta-kālo na jīvati

One will not die before their time has come, even though they are pierced by a thousand shafts; nor will one live after their time is expired, even if they are merely touched by a blade of grass.

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Dedication to Guru

Agastya-saṁhitā, quoted in
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (4.367-371)

ye guru ājñāṁ na kurvanti pāpiṣṭhāḥ puruṣādhamāḥ
na tesāṁ naraka-klesa-nistāro muni-sattama

yaiḥ śiṣyaiḥ śaśvadārādhyā guravo hy avamānitāḥ
putra-mitra-kulatrādi-sampadbhyaḥ pracyutā hi te

O best of the sages, those low sinful persons who don't obey their guru's orders will never get relief from the agonies of hell. They will lose their children, friends, wealth, wife, and family.

adhikṣipya guruṁ mohāt puruṣaṁ pravadanti ye
śūkaratvaṁ bhavaty eva teṣāṁ janma-śateṣv api

Those persons who out of ignorance chastise the guru and think him to be an ordinary person will have to take birth as pigs for one hundred lives.

ye guru-drohiṇo mūḍhāḥ satataṁ pāpa-kāriṇaḥ
tesāñ ca yāvat sukṛtaṁ duṣkṛtam syān na saṁśayaḥ

ataḥ prāg gurum abhyarcya kṛṣṇa-bhāvena buddhimān
tryavarānasamān kuryāt praṇāmān daṇḍa-pātavat

Those who behave defiantly toward their guru will perpetually be bound to commit sins. There is no doubt that all of their piety will turn into sins. Therefore, intelligent persons should first worship their guru while treating him or her as non-different from Krishna. They should offer prostrated obeisances (*daṇḍavat praṇāms*) to and worship their guru at least three times a day.

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